

City of Morgantown
Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes December 18, 2014

Present: Jan Derry, Chair
Fran Whiteman
Brian Jara
Anne Marie Lofaso
Marlene Robinson-Savino, Vice Chair
Don Spencer, Secretary

Dave Bott – Administrative Representative
Tim Hairston – Liaison/ State HRC

Members brought food and posters for an informal seasonal reception at 6 p.m. in advance of the regular business meeting.

Meeting called to order by Jan Derry, Chair, at 6:40 p.m. The meeting agenda was approved without changes.

Public Session: No public session attendees were present.

Communications: Copies of the MLK Day observance flyers were distributed in the meeting packet. Also included in the packet were copies of an open letter by the demonstrators at Ferguson, MO as well as statements on the deaths of black youths and descriptions of die-ins at medical schools throughout the eastern seaboard cities. (A request that the HRC meet with the City Chief of Police was deferred until to a discussion on “liaisons” scheduled for later in the agenda.) Information on an ACLU legislative proposal for reducing youth incarceration in the State was also distributed and discussed briefly.

A copy of information on the Civil Action Movement in 5 U.S. cities was shared: Eugene, OR, Columbus, IN, Chapel Hill, NC, Carrboro, NC, and Pittsburgh.

Reports indicate that January 19 will be the day for not only the local MLK Day events but also Fairness Day at the Legislature. Related information was included in the packet.

Minutes: On a motion by Anne Marie Lofaso seconded by Marlene Robinson-Savino, the minutes of the November 20, 2014 meeting were approved.

Priority Issues: Following- up on a discussion of operation procedures for the Human Rights Commission at the November meeting and distribution of draft copies of the Internal Operating Procedures in advance of the current meeting, the Commission took action to approve the procedures for implementation. On a motion by Marlene Robinson-Savino, seconded by Anne Marie Lofaso, the Commission unanimously voted to approve the HRC Internal Operating Procedures to be effective as of December 18, 2014.

Jan Derry presented a proposed Annual Report for the Commission’s work in 2014 and a proposed list of HRC priorities for 2015. The documents were approved in substance by

consensus, but because several changes in wording were agreed upon, Anne Marie Lofaso agreed to edit it before final action is taken in January.

Jan Derry and Don Spencer presented proposed budget items which included:

1. Printing of inclusive city plan and notebooks
2. Printing of updated/upgraded affirmative action plan
3. Representation software for City Clerk and Personnel Office
4. 24/7 human rights access telephone line installation w/ 12 months of operation
5. Human Rights Day Award preparation
6. Wall plaque record for recipient organizations and individuals and years received. Commissioners added...
7. Newsprint pads for town meeting
8. Interpreters for town meeting
9. Rental costs for half day at Marilla Center
10. And support for HR poster costs, if remaining funds permit.

On a motion by Marlene Robinson, seconded by Anne Marie Lofaso, the budget items were approved. Dave Bott indicated that he would know more about the financial situation of CDBG funds at the beginning of February.

Don Spencer reported on his meeting with Bob Jones regarding plans for following up on the Need Survey. The proposed plans include having a town meeting on the priorities identified in the Human Rights Needs Survey completed in June. It is proposed that the meeting be held on February 16 at the City Hall Council Chambers. The Commissioners recommended that the event be changed to the Marilla Center where more space and easier parking is available. The plan involves inviting the participation of the 27 organization partners who assisted the Commission in making the survey available to their members and clients. More specifics will be available at the January meeting.

The Calendar of Human Rights Observances reviewed at the November HRC meeting was once again discussed by the Commission. Anne Marie Lofaso volunteered to make a final edit of the document before it is posted on the web site and publicized by newsletter and news release.

Tim Hairston announced that the State HRC will be holding a Statewide Forum at Stonewall Jackson on March 26 and 27. Local Human Rights Commissions will be invited to attend. This will include Charleston, Beckley, Parkersburg, Wheeling and Morgantown.

Progress Reports: Mike Fike sent an email informing the Commission that an Employment and Housing Non-Discrimination Act has been included as a City Council legislative priority list for the 2015 session.

In as much as Fran Whiteman had to leave the meeting early, discussion of the MEI Scorecard distribution was curtailed as were her proposals regarding liaisons with the offices of the City Manager and Chief of Police.

Dave Bott reported on the status of the planning for availability of intern services for Affirmative Action planning. The City administration is interested in knowing what EEOC standards the City must comply with whereas the HRC probably will also be interested in several state-of-the-art innovations as well. It is expected that a public policy intern will be requested for the fall of 2015.

There was no report on the WVU Community Human Rights Film Festival.

Brian Jara reported being in contact with information on Civil Right History instruction available from the Teaching Tolerance program of the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Marlene Robinson-Sovino reported that the Diversity Representation Committee, which includes Marlene, Bob Jones, and Don Spencer, will be meeting with the City Manager, the Personnel Specialist, and the City Clerk on December 15. The purpose of the three separate meetings is to learn more about the current operations of the City staff and volunteer personnel systems, training, and record keeping.

A list of meeting dates for regular Commission meetings planned for 2015 was distributed in the packets. The next meeting of the Commission will be held on January 15 at 6:30 p.m.

There being no objection, the meeting was adjourned by the chair at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Don Spencer
Secretary